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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
LANSING

JOHN D. CHERRY, JR.
LT. GOVERNOR

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**Lt. Governor Cherry, Office of the Great Lakes Seeking
Public Comment on Plan to Protect, Restore Michigan's Great Lakes**
Eight public meetings to be held across the state

LANSING – In an effort to put an action plan in place that will protect and restore the Great Lakes and recognize their vital role in Michigan's economic transformation, Lt. Governor John D. Cherry, Jr. and the Michigan Office of the Great Lakes (OGL) are launching a series of public meetings to give citizens an opportunity to share their ideas on ways the lakes can be protected for generations to come.

The plan, developed by stakeholders and the OGL, is entitled: "MI Great Lakes Plan: Our Path to Protect and Restore Michigan's Natural Treasures."

"As we continue our work to transform Michigan's economy, it is critical that we protect our greatest assets, which can enhance prosperity and job creation while improving our quality of life," said Cherry, who is concluding his term as chair of the Great Lakes Commission. "It is essential that Michigan citizens have an opportunity to help identify the most important Great Lakes protection and restoration efforts that are needed across the state."

Working with the Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) and OGL, local watershed groups will host eight public meetings across the state. These meetings will be held at 7:00 p.m. on the following dates:

- October 13, 2008 – in **Marquette** at Northern Michigan University's University Center
- October 16, 2008 – in **Clinton Township** at Macomb Community College's Center Campus University Center
- October 17, 2008 – in **Grayling** at the Grayling Township Hall
- October 20, 2008 – in **Detroit** at the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments' office
- October 21, 2008 – in **Muskegon** at Grand Valley State University's Annis Water Resources Institute
- October 23, 2008 – in **Saginaw** at Saginaw Valley State University

(more)

- October 27, 2008 – in **Petoskey** at North Central Michigan College's University Center
- November 19, 2008 – in **Kalamazoo** at the Kalamazoo Nature Center

At these meetings, the lieutenant governor, the OGL and the MUCC will seek public comment on the action plan. They will also recognize and celebrate local efforts to protect, remediate, and restore the Great Lakes through the Great Lakes Keepers Award program.

“We have engaged technical experts from state and federal agencies and received input from stakeholders across the state in the development and refining of the draft plan,” said OGL Director Ken DeBeaussaert. “Citizens can help ensure that the action plan is the right plan for protecting the Great Lakes.”

The draft plan seeks to preserve the integrity of the Great Lakes ecosystem into the future through state and local partnerships that, together, will create a Great Lakes system that stops new aquatic invasive species (AIS) from being introduced into Michigan waters, protects and restores fish and wildlife habitats, controls nonpoint source pollution, restores beneficial uses in areas of concerns, and protects public health from releases and exposure to toxic substances.

The Office of the Great Lakes will deliver a final report to Lt. Governor Cherry by the end of the year and begin work on implementing the recommendations.

For additional information regarding the public meetings or to obtain a copy of the draft plan, visit www.michigan.gov/deqgreatlakes and click on Protection and Restoration. Written comments on the draft plan may be submitted on or before November 26, 2008 to the Office of the Great Lakes, DEQ, P.O. Box 30473-7973, Lansing, Michigan 48909; by fax at 517-335-4053; or by emailing DEQ-GreatLakesRestoration@michigan.gov. Additional information is also available by contacting the Office of the Great Lakes at 517-335-4056.

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